

Crediting Deli Meats in the Summer Food Service Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The [SFSP meal patterns](#) require 2 ounces of the meat/meat alternates component at lunch and supper. The meat/meat alternates component is optional at breakfast. A 1-ounce serving of the meat/meat alternates component may be served as one of the two required snack components.

For information on the SFSP meal patterns and the meat/meat alternates component, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resource, [Requirements for the Meat/Meat Alternates Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#), and visit the "[SFSP Meal Patterns](#)" and "[Meat/Meat Alternates Component for the SFSP](#)" sections of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.



Deli meats (such as turkey, chicken, ham, roast beef, salami, and bologna) credit as the meat/meat alternates component in the SFSP meal patterns. However, SFSP sponsors must ensure that the serving of deli meat provides the required amount of the meat/meat alternates component for SFSP meals and snacks. The amount of deli meat that provides 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component depends on the product's ingredients and varies greatly between different brands and types.

- **100 percent meat:** Products that are 100 percent meat without added liquids (e.g., water or broth), binders, and extenders credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis (actual serving weight). For example, a 1-ounce serving of deli meat that is 100 percent meat credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.
- **Added liquids, binders, and extenders:** Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula. A 1-ounce serving of these products does **not** credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. The crediting depends on the amount of meat per serving, excluding added ingredients. For example, one brand of deli meat might require 1.6 ounces to credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, while another brand might require 2.3 ounces to credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.



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Required Crediting Documentation

SFSP sponsors must obtain appropriate crediting documentation for all deli meats with added liquids, binders, and extenders. Acceptable documentation includes 1) an original Child Nutrition (CN) label from the product carton, or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or 2) a product formulation statement (PFS) signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of the meat/meat alternates component contained in one serving of the product.

For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, For more information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), [Product Formulation Statements](#) and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the SFSP](#), and the USDA's resources, [Product Formulation Statement \(Product Analysis\) for Meat/Meat Alternate \(M/MA\) Products in Child Nutrition Programs](#) and [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#). For additional guidance, visit the "[Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.

Liquids, Binders, and Extenders

The ingredients statements below show examples of turkey breast products that contain added liquid, binders, and extenders.

- Ingredients: Turkey breast, *water*, *modified cornstarch*, contains less than 2% of sodium lactate, salt, sugar, sodium phosphates, *carrageenan*, natural flavor, sodium diacetate, potassium chloride, sodium ascorbate, sodium nitrite, caramel color.
- Ingredients: Turkey breast meat, *turkey broth*, contains 2% or less salt, sugar, *carrageenan*, sodium phosphate, sodium acetate, sodium diacetate, flavoring.



Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders cannot credit as the meat/meat alternates component without a CN label or PFS stating the amount of the meat/meat alternates component per serving. Menu planners must review product labels and ingredients to determine if commercial products contain added liquids, binders, and extenders.

Table 1 lists examples of ingredients that are binders and extenders.

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Table 1. Examples of binders and extenders ¹

Agar-agar	Dried milk	Sodium caseinate
Algin (a mixture of sodium alginate, calcium carbonate and calcium gluconate/lactic acid)	Dry or dried whey	Soy flour (APP) ²
	Enzyme (rennet) treated calcium-reduced dried skim milk and calcium lactate	Soy protein concentrate (APP) ²
Bread		Starchy vegetable flour
Calcium-reduced dried skim milk	Gums, vegetable	Tapioca dextrin
Carrageenan	Isolated soy protein (APP) ²	Vegetable starch
Carboxymethyl cellulose (cellulose gum)	Locust bean gum	Wheat gluten
Cereal	Methyl cellulose	Whey
	Modified food starch	Whey protein concentrate (APP) ²
	Reduced lactose whey	Xanthan gum
	Reduced minerals	

¹ Binders and extenders are defined by the USDA's regulations for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) ([9 CFR 318.7](#)).

² Products may contain these ingredients if they meet the USDA's requirements for alternate protein products (APPs). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the SFSP](#).

Developing Recipes for Deli Meats

Different brands and types of deli meat credit differently. To ensure proper crediting, SFSP sponsors should develop standardized recipes for menu items that contain deli meats, such as sandwiches and other entrees. The recipes should indicate the deli meat's contribution to the meat/meat alternates component based on a specific weight of a specific brand. For ease of portioning, round up the weight of the deli meat in the recipe to the nearest measure. For example, the recipe should list 1.2 ounces as 1.25 ounces and 1.6 ounces as 1.75 ounces.

If a SFSP sponsor makes the same food item using different brands of deli meats that credit differently, the standardized recipe should include the required weight of each brand. For example, if a summer meals site makes a turkey sandwich using either ABC brand turkey breast or XYZ brand turkey breast, the standardized recipe should include the required weight of ABC brand and the required weight of XYZ brand. Alternatively, the SFSP sponsor could develop a separate standardized turkey sandwich recipe for each brand of deli meat. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Standardized Recipe Form for the SFSP](#) and visit the "[Standardized Recipes](#)" section of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.



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Comparing Cost

The deli product with the lowest cost per pound might not be the least expensive. SFSP sponsors should consider the cost per ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, instead of the cost per ounce of meat. This provides a more accurate reflection of the product's cost in SFSP meals and snacks. Table 2 shows a sample cost comparison.

Table 2. Cost comparison of sample deli meats				
Food item	Price per pound	Price per ounce	Amount to provide 1 ounce of meat/meat alternates ¹	Cost of 1 ounce of meat/meat alternates
Sample product A: Deli meat with liquids, binders, and extenders	\$4.99	\$.31	1.7 ounces ²	\$.53
Sample product B: Deli meat without liquids, binders, and extenders	\$6.99	\$.44	1 ounce	\$.44
<p>¹ Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders require a CN label or PFS to document the amount of the meat/meat alternates component per serving. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program and Product Formulation Statements.</p> <p>² This information would be obtained from the product's PFS.</p>				

Sample product A (deli meat with liquids, binders, and extenders) costs \$2 less per pound than sample product B (deli meat without liquids, binders, and extenders). However, when the menu planner compares the cost based on 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, a serving of sample product A costs 53 cents and a serving of sample product B costs 44 cents. Sample product A requires almost twice the weight of sample product B to provide 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, due to the added liquids, binders, and extenders.

Determining the cost per ounce of meat/meat alternates helps SFSP sponsors decide if the required meal pattern serving for a specific brand of deli meat is reasonable and cost effective.

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Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Large chunks or cubes of deli meats are choking hazards. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding how to offer deli meats in SFSP menus; and modify foods and menus as appropriate. For additional guidance, visit the “[Choking Prevention](#)” section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the SFSP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Accepting_Processed_Product_Documentation_SFSP.pdf

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CN_Labeling_Program.pdf

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the SFSP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Credit_Commercial_MMA_SFSP.pdf

Crediting Foods in the SFSP (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program/Documents>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Meal Patterns for the SFSP (CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program#MealPatterns>

Meat/Meat Alternates Component for the SFSP (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program/Documents#MMA>

Nutrition Guide: Summer Food Service Program (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/USDA_SFSP_NutritionGuide.pdf

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Meats/Meat Alternates (M/MA) in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Meats-Meat_Alternates_Fillable_508.pdf

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Product_Formulation_Statements.pdf

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Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (APP) (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/questions-and-answers-alternate-protein-products-app>

Requirements for the Meat/Meat Alternates Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Component_MMA_SFSP.pdf

Resources for the SFSP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/MealPattern/Resources_SFSP_Meal_Patterns.pdf

Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf

Standardized Recipe Form for the SFSP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Standardized_Recipe_Form_SFSP.docx

Standardized Recipes ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program/Documents#StandardizedRecipes>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturePFStipsheet.pdf>

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For more information, visit the [SFSP Meal Patterns](#) and [Crediting Foods in the SFSP](#) sections of the CSDE's SFSP webpage, or contact the [Summer Meals staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Credit_Deli_SFSP.pdf.

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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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